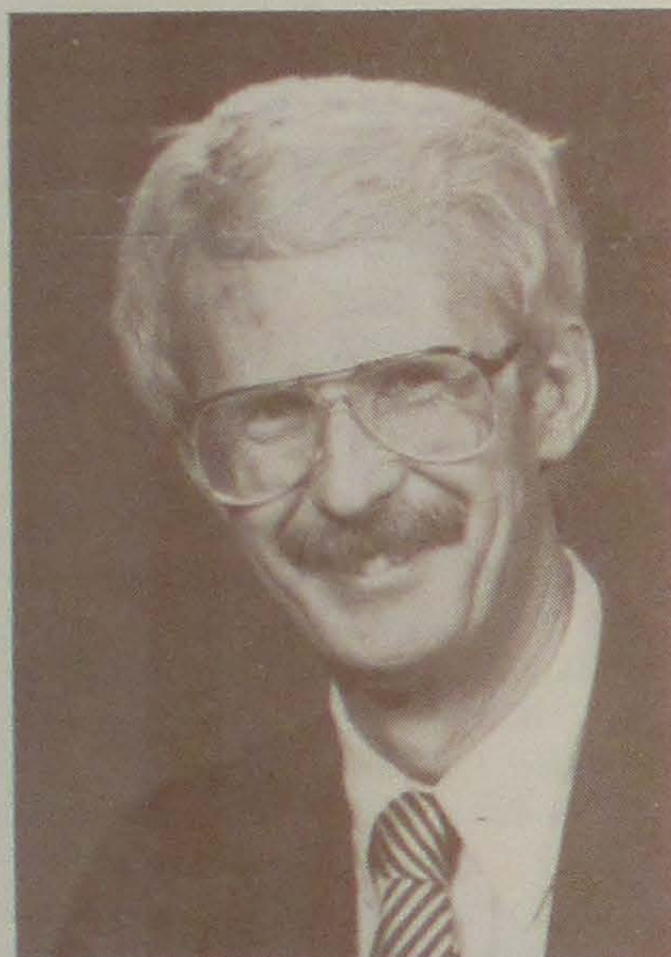




The Ames Intelligencer

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David Lendt will speak about "Ding and Ames" at the annual Ames Heritage Association meeting on Tuesday, 13, 1987 in the auditorium of the Ames Public Library, 515 Douglas Avenue.

Ding Darling Biographer To Speak at AHA Meeting

David Lendt, author of "Ding: The Life of Jay Norwood Darling," will be the guest speaker at the annual Ames Heritage Association meeting to be held Tuesday, January 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Ames Public Library, 515 Douglas Avenue.

Lendt, director of information at Iowa State University, will discuss the life of Iowa's two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist and conservationist, Ding Darling. Darling's cartoons about politics, humor, conservation issues, and life in general amused, informed, and sometimes enraged readers of the **Des Moines Register** from 1906

until his retirement in 1949, earning him a special place in the hearts of conservationists, Iowans, and, ultimately, the nation. In his speech, "Ding and Ames," Lendt will portray the essence of this sometimes controversial, sometimes flamboyant, but always creative man.

Officers for 1987 and five members of the Board of Directors will be elected at the annual meeting. Current Ames Heritage Association President Leland Himan invites the public to attend the meeting and encourages interested persons to serve as members of the board to provide new energy and interest in the Ames Heritage Association.



As these cartoons illustrate, Ding Darling's humor and concern for Iowa's natural resources were frequent topics of his cartoons.

Ames' Perennial Mayor Leaves His Mark



Parley Sheldon, Ames' perennial mayor, left his mark on early and present-day Ames as banker, postmaster, and mayor, operator of a hotel, and supporter of the Dinkey railroad, Iowa State College, and the Iowa Highway Commission.

By Farwell Brown

Parley Sheldon, an early Ames banker and its perennial mayor, was born on June 7, 1844 on a farm in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. He was the sixth son of Parley and Elvira (Litch) Sheldon. In 1861, Parley enlisted in the 175th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and was honorably discharged in August 1865. In September 1865, he married Frances A. Judd, also a native of Cuyahoga County.

The Sheldons came to Iowa in 1874, and, in 1875, they moved to the farm which they purchased just south of Ames. They farmed until 1882 when they moved into town. Parley first engaged in livestock buying and selling. In 1890, he purchased the Story County Bank, located on the corner of Douglas

Avenue and Main Street. His bank became a state bank in 1917 at about the same time that Sheldon and the Munn family built the Sheldon-Munn Hotel. The bank was moved to the corner location of the hotel's ground floor. His bank merged, on January 1, 1932, with the Union National Bank, becoming the Union Story Trust and Savings Bank. That bank has since become the United Bank of Ames.

Probably no man in the early days of Ames was more distinguished for his public-spirited service to the town. He was first elected to the city council in 1883 and became mayor in 1884. In all, he was mayor of Ames for 18 years, over a 32-year period. He also served as postmaster of Ames from 1885 until 1890 and again from 1894 until 1898.

In his fifth year as mayor, the construction of a municipal light plant was first discussed. Its construction and operations were begun in 1894 under the administration of Henry Wilson. Sheldon is said to have saved the light plant, when, in 1909, it was put up to public vote to accept a private industry offer of \$40,000 for the plant. A few days before the vote was held, Parley Sheldon placed his personal offer of \$50,000 before the council. The vote to sell failed by ten votes, 138 to 148.

Parley Sheldon was instrumental in the development of the Ames and College Railroad in 1892. One of his diversions was to board the Dinkey steam train and take over the controls for a run to the Iowa State College campus and back to town. He was also a Democrat of influence

who carried significant weight with the Iowa Legislature and, in his day, was a strong lobbyist for the college. As county chairperson for the Democratic Party for a number of years, his influence went beyond the boundaries of the State of Iowa. Republicans, as well as Democrats, listened to Parley Sheldon.

Interested in good roads for the state, Sheldon was an active member of the U.S. Good Roads Association. He was instrumental in bringing their national convention to Des Moines in 1928. An officer in both the Jefferson and Wilson Highway Associations, he was able to see both routes located through Ames. In 1904, when the Iowa Highway Commission was first established in Ames with headquarters in Iowa State College's Engineering Hall, it was Parley Sheldon who became a prime mover in making Ames the permanent location for the commission. He organized an association to purchase the site for the first Highway Commission building in Ames built in 1923.

Sheldon was president of the Ames Chautauqua Association for many years. He was also a member, not only of the Ames Chamber of Commerce, but also the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce.

This public-spirited Ames pioneer died on May 22, 1932 at the age of 87. His influence was said to have been widely felt because of his natural ability to make friends. And Parley Sheldon, Ames' perennial mayor, also put community interest ahead of self-interest time and time again.



Students line up before entering the old Bloomington schoolhouse in this photograph taken about the year 1910.

Memories Revived as School Collapses

By Farwell Brown

The old Bloomington School, situated one-half mile west of the National Animal Disease Lab, and almost the last evidence of the town of Bloomington, collapsed in late November of this year. The snow and wind storm on November 20, 1986 brought down the roof and left the side walls supported only by the trees that have grown next to the building since its use as a school was discontinued more than 40 years ago. A chalkboard, now fully exposed to the weather, still carries the remnants of words and figures that, until now, have recalled a class recitation of long ago.

If it had not been for a decision made by railroad executives in 1863, the one-room Bloomington School might have been in a fast-growing town. Or perhaps the name of our town might have been Bloomington, and there might not have been a town named Ames right here. The fact is that Bloomington was there first, and the schoolhouse was probably the earliest evidence of that community located not much more than a mile north of the Ames of today.

In June 1863, John I. Blair, engineer for the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, accompanied by W.W. Walker, an attorney, and Oakes Ames, a congressman from Massachusetts, left Chicago traveling west to Marshalltown, Iowa, then the end of the railroad line. There they took the stagecoach to continue their excursion following the proposed route for the line, then under construction, with a destination of Council Bluffs. Blair took notes in his field book, notes that would be used in determining the precise route for the new rail line.

A stop was made at Bloomington because that was the only village west of Nevada located near the Skunk River and close to being in line with the proposed Iowa Agricultural College established four years earlier but not yet open for students. Some of the people Blair might have talked to include Presley Craig, Franklin Thompson, and Lewis Osborn. Thompson had been one of the people who had platted the town of Bloomington consisting of 16 square blocks of ten lots each in the southeast quarter of Section 25

of Franklin Township. Osborn had acquired title to most of the town lots in 1859. And it had been Craig and his wife, Elizabeth, who had deeded two acres of land for the school next to the western boundary of the village.

The deed was to the Franklin Township School, District No. 4. It was dated November 20, 1855. The plat of the town of Bloomington was dated June 15, 1857. As it turned out, the school had a long life, while the town of Bloomington soon was replaced by the newly-established village of Ames, created by the railroad's decision to locate its right-of-way about a mile and one half to the south of Bloomington. Cheaper land and fewer hills may have been the factors in the decision. Blair, who named nearly 20 towns in Iowa, gave the name of his friend, Ames, to the village in the lowlands west of the Skunk River.

Bloomington School must have been built in 1855 or very soon after that date. An early secretary's annual report shows that there were nine sub-districts in Franklin Township with one schoolhouse in each. Ruth Hussong, resident of Ames since 1920 who attended Bloomington School through the seventh grade, believes that the structure which remains is basically the original building.

Professor Wesley Shank with Iowa State University's architectural department, after examining the site, said that there is evidence that some of the collapsed building dates from the original, but that there is also evidence that the building underwent extensive remodeling through the years. That evidence includes one layer of concrete block on the original stone foundation, double-hung windows, and round nails in much of the exterior.

Harley "Hodge" Griffith, lifelong resident of the Bloomington neighborhood, attended Bloomington School from 1915, completing the eight grades there. He recalls that there were windows on the east side of the schoolhouse that were removed before he started school. Much of the structure can be considered to date back to an early date, therefore, and as recently as 1945, this one-room school was the center of what can still be called the Bloomington community.

The story of the Bloomington School's life is typical of the one-room school in Iowa. It remained in use as a school longer than many in this area. The one-room schools in the Gilbert area were consolidated in 1917. The schools in the farm area around Ames were consolidated at



In this 1910 photograph, Bloomington School pupils pose on the steps of their schoolhouse. In the back row, left to right, are Marie Lewis, Clara Noble, Lois Breese, Paul Taylor, Irma Taylor, Arthur Lewis, and Mona Griffith. In the second row, left to right, are Gayle Griffith, Francis Huntly, Beulah Carpenter, Inez Hussong, Bernice Griffith, and Aletha Banks. In the front row, left to right, are Fern Huntly and Lloyd Taylor.

about the same time. Bloomington School, however, continued until the end of World War II before closing. Area students then attended Ames schools for a few years and later were directed to Gilbert or Milford. Its life span as a school appears to have covered a 90-year period.

Student numbers varied from more than 20 to 12 or 13 in its last years. The secretary's report for 1873 shows 38 students enrolled, with an average daily attendance of 26 students. The same report indicates that there were 23 males and 19 females between the ages of seven and 14 in the district who were not enrolled in any school at that time.

Bloomington School never had electricity. A potbelly stove was located in the corner to the left of the door, and a good supply of corn cobs, cord wood, and coal was kept in a woodshed. Dean Olson, who now owns the property which became a part of his farm sometime after 1945, remembers that Ray Wortman and others kept the woodshed supplied. Hodge Griffith recalls that when he attended Bloomington School there were days when he kept his heavy jacket on all day. The stove, he recalls, had a steel jacket around it to protect the students from contact with the heated stove and to help circulate the warm air upward from the stove. He says that the warmest spot in the room was in the corner farthest from the stove. Dean Olson recalls that that was where the teacher's desk was located.

A range in ages was always a

factor in a one-room schoolhouse, and, by the time students finished the eighth grade, they'd had the advantage of hearing the recitations and the teacher's instructions so many times that review seemed the order of the day. But boredom was apparently not a factor in the experience. The personal attention of the teacher and older pupils assisting the younger ones were a part of the Bloomington School day. There was also the opportunity to become familiar with the wildflowers in the adjacent woodland, and a teacher often was able to use his or her creativity in maintaining the interest of the students. One does, however, hear stories of typical discipline problems, and the use of a dunce cap is specifically recalled.

The Christmas program at Bloomington School is remembered by many of its former pupils. Held either in the afternoon or evening of the last day of school before Christmas, it was a program in which everyone had a part. There was a tree decorated with real candles, and the room was lighted by lanterns. Parents and neighborhood friends all came on such special occasions.

Ruth Hussong remembers that the school day was opened with prayer, the singing of a patriotic song, and the pledge of allegiance to the flag. In the days of the one-room school, there was something of a homogeneous feeling in such a community when it came to religion. The Bloomington Methodist Chapel held its services in the schoolhouse

and is considered to be the first Methodist organization in the Ames area. In 1865, the trustees of the Bloomington Methodist Chapel acquired lots in the adjacent Bloomington village from Louis Osborn and built their own meetinghouse in the village.

The abundant woodlands to the west and south of Bloomington provided one of Iowa State's most famous graduates, George Washington Carver, with a natural laboratory for his nature walks. He is said to have frequently walked out from the campus through the woods and up to the village of Bloomington on Sunday mornings and slipped into a back seat in the Bloomington Chapel. Carver, Iowa State's first black student, was aware and appreciative of the natural resources in this native woodland area.

Bloomington School graduates returned for reunions throughout the 1930s and up until World War II. Reunions have not been resumed since. Writing from California in 1938, a former Bloomington School graduate wrote, in part, "... as I compare the qualities of good old Bloomington as I once knew her, I rejoice in her simplicity and many other virtuous traits." He recalled "Bloomington's commanding view overlooking Ames and the river valley, its rich soil ... good climate and good people." In the memories of many like him, Bloomington School remains, in his words, "a favored location."



Shown here at a 1933 reunion of Bloomington School graduates are, back row, left: Arthur Buck; third man from left: Roy Taylor; fourth man from left: George Miller; seventh man from left: Frank Buck; far right: Allan Buck. Front right center: Floyd Buck; fourth front right: Mrs. Nanny Cowdrey. Mrs. Frank Buck, not shown here, was secretary of the reunion. Other names are not available. This photograph shows only a portion of the people who attended the reunion.



The Bloomington School, shown here in December 1986 following its collapse, was almost the last remaining evidence of the town of Bloomington, north of Ames.

The Intelligencer

"The Weekly (Ames) *Intelligencer*, a live paper, was first published by Mr. A. McFadden, an experienced newspaper publisher and editor. Its first issue was about April 1868 - nineteen years ago - and is still being published. J.E. Duncan, Esq., is editor and proprietor, and gets up an excellent paper."

From the description of Ames' first newspaper in William G. Allen's *History of Story County* written in 1887 (page 232).

Renewals Due in January

It's time to renew your membership in the Ames Heritage Association for 1987. New memberships will be warmly welcomed as well.

Membership dues support many of the projects of the Heritage Association, including *The Intelligencer* sent to members three times a year. According to President Leland Himan, funds will pay for the liability insurance for Hoggatt School, repair and upkeep at the school, and placing a marker at the Billy Sunday family cemetery off South Duff Avenue in Ames.

"We depend on our dues to keep organization working and to meet its obligations," says Himan. Some

of the work projects for 1987 include continued interest in the preservation of the downtown Ames Depot, currently housing city governmental offices. The Ames Heritage Association is also interested in obtaining a caboose for placement in the community to preserve it as a symbol of the role the railroads played in the growth and development of the City of Ames.

The AHA will also continue to support the Old Town Neighborhood Association in its task of identifying and preserving the architecture within the original historic village of Ames which ran north to south between the railroad

tracks downtown to between Eighth and Ninth Streets and east to west between Duff and Burnett Avenues.

To help keep the Ames Heritage Association active and strong, please renew your membership today. Members are also encouraged to bring new members into the organization.

Annual membership dues are: Regular, \$5.00; Business and Organization, \$25.00 or more; Sustaining, \$100; and Life, \$1000.

Make checks payable to the Ames Heritage Association and mail to Treasurer Jan Halverson, P.O. Box 821, Ames, Iowa 50010.

Thank you!

Please enroll me as a 1987 member of the AMES HERITAGE ASSOCIATION.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Type of Membership:

_____ Regular (\$5.00)

_____ Business and Organization (\$25.00 or more)

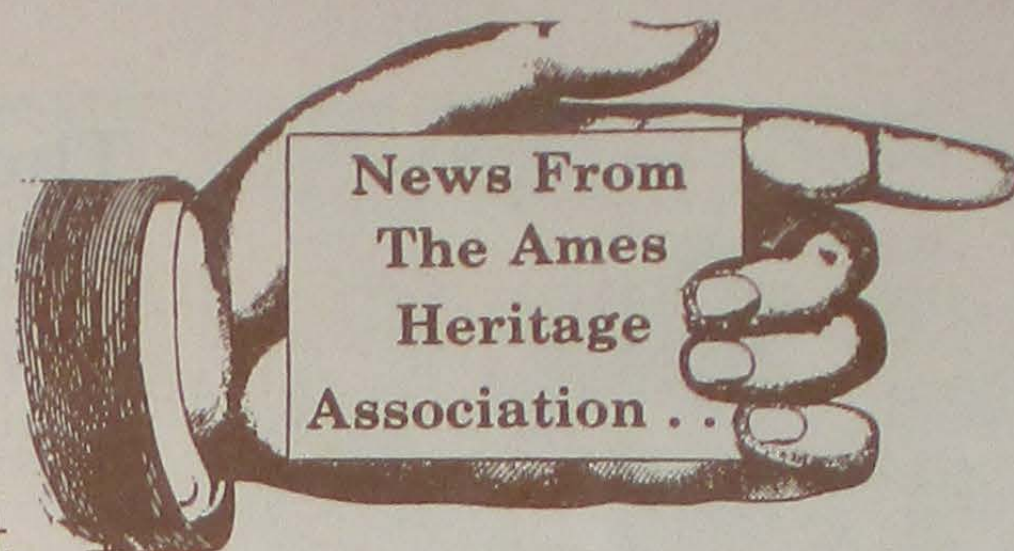
_____ Sustaining (\$100)

_____ Life (\$1000)

Please make checks payable to the AMES HERITAGE ASSOCIATION and mail to
Treasurer Jan Halverson, P.O. Box 821, Ames, Iowa 50010.

Thank You!

Himan Retiring as President



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The Ames Heritage Association meets the second Tuesday of every month September through May at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the Ames Public Library, 515 Douglas Avenue.

The annual meeting is held the second Tuesday of January. Time and place are announced.

President Leland Himan, retiring after two terms as president of the Ames Heritage Association, recently looked back with pride on the accomplishments of the Heritage Association during 1986.

Jack Shelley started the new year with spirit as the guest speaker at the annual meeting held January 1986, sharing the effectiveness of the Boone Historical Society in preserving area historical sites. Later in the year, two open houses were held at Hoggatt School, and the Ames Heritage Association presented a display at the North Grand Mall as part of its Homecoming '86 event.

The signs identifying Billy Sunday Drive were placed, and the plaque marking the Billy Sunday family cemetery, as well as the City of Ames and Iowa Department of Transportation directional signs, will be placed within the next months. The Heritage Association also made a financial contribution to the Old Town Association's project to document the historical homes within the district in order to qualify for placement with the National Registry of Historical Places.

Ames Heritage Association members were informed and entertained by three issues of **The Intelligencer**, and Farewell Brown, through his research and writing, was continually recognized for his contributions in recording and preserving the history of Ames. And the AHA continues to be interested in studying and encouraging the placement of pieces of art and artifacts of early Ames at the public library.

It was a busy year for the Ames Heritage Association, but Himan encourages the new board members and officers to plan a new set of directions, priorities, and accomplishments for 1987. "We need new ideas and guidance," Himan says, "as we grow in membership over the next couple of years."

As for Himan, he says, "I've greatly enjoyed being a part of the Ames Heritage Association. I've got a lot of interest in history in general, and I enjoy being a part of history in the making."

"I fully expect to continue to be a part of the Ames Heritage Association in the future."

We hope so, Leland, and we thank you for your leadership.

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